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GRADUATE SCHOOL

CONTINUING EDUCATION
FOR THE FEDERAL
COMMUNITY

Newsletter

January 13, 1967

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 18	Beginning of Computer Science Classes
March 3	Physical Sciences teachers and committee meeting for lunch in Room 6956, South Building.
March 7	Faculty Luncheon - John Dildine of The Folklore Society of Greater Washington will be the guest speaker.
April 4	Regular Faculty Luncheon

THE AUDIO-TUTORIAL APPROACH

Those who braved the snow-storm to attend our February faculty luncheon were rewarded with an inspiring talk by Dr. S. N. Postlethwait, Professor of Biology at Purdue University and originator of the Audio-Tutorial System.



"It's time," Dr. Postlethwait declared, "to start focusing on the needs of the individual!"

The "problem" in education, he explained, is that "learning must be done by the learner." Thus the educational system should provide activities which require student involvement. The teacher is obliged to provide a course structure which will permit the student to engage in those activities and situations which contribute to learning.

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CURRENT SERIALS SECTION

The way he met this challenge--and developed the Audio-Tutorial program--Dr. Postlethwait, said had its beginnings six years ago when he realized that the diversity in prior education among his first-year botany students required that he make adjustments to accomodate those who needed extra help. This extra help at first took the form of extra, taped lectures, made available to students through an audio-visual library.

From this beginning, he went on to completely restructure the botany course, disregarding all traditional limitations and placing total emphasis on student learning.

The course now includes three basic elements: the General Assembly Session, the Independent Study Session, and the Integrated Quiz Session.

The General Assembly Session, held one hour a week, is non-mandatory and can be attended by the entire multi-section class. The GAS is conducted by the senior instructor and gives him the opportunity to put material in perspective instead of concentrating solely on getting material across. For the student, it provides opportunity to become acquainted with "the voice on the tape" and to absorb the "personality" of the course. The session can also be used for films, for guest lecturers, and the like.

The Independent Study Session is conducted in a supervised self-instructional laboratory where the student can work at his convenience for as long and as often as he needs or desires. It is open and staffed 14 hours a day, 5 days a week. Here the student listens to taped lectures, discussions, and instructions--and he reads, writes, observes, goes to the demonstration table or the greenhouse to conduct experiments. For any problem requiring instructor assistance, the student can obtain direct attention to his individual needs or interests. A major feature, of course, is that each student can work at his own speed with the carefully structured materials, going as fast or as slow--and repeating as much--as he wishes without affecting the rest of the class.

The Integrated Quiz Session is a modified seminar and oral quiz held once a week. It involves eight students seated informally around a table with one instructor. The instructor is supplied with the various items that were used in the learning center the preceding week--items such as plant specimens, a diagram or chart, a time-lapse movie, experimental equipment, etc. The students are graded according to how well they can explain the role and objective of these items in the week's work and how the objective is fulfilled and the theme of the week is clarified and amplified by the comments of the group.

These sessions, moreover, serve as an effective feedback mechanism denoting the success or failure of any program sequence and often providing clues for improving the program. It is also used as a tool for preventing procrastination on the part of the students

Dr. Postlethwait said that the Audio-Tutorial program has provided the opportunity for more personal contacts with students on the part of instructors and has freed them from being merely a communication vehicle so that they have more time for the real business of teaching--orientation, direction, elucidation, and guidance.

He added that the increased learning efficiency of the Audio-Tutorial approach has permitted a 50 percent increase in course content--has cut costs--and has resulted in higher grades. Most important--the students like it!

If you would like to read more, Dr. Postlethwait has a book published by Burgess, Minneapolis, 1966, of 114 pages on the integrated experience approach to learning with emphasis on individual study.

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DIODENES, PUT DOWN THE LANTERN

Graduate School students are honest! During registration, one enrollee, after standing in line for an hour discovered she had left her pocketbook at a table where she had filled out her registration forms. Another student, however, had found it and turned it in to the cashier. All contents were intact, including some money belonging to her agency.

Another enrollee got home after registering and found she still had her \$42 tuition fee, even though she had been given a receipt and a stamped building pass. She came back and gave us the money.

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POLICE PROTECTION

Washington Metropolitan Police Captains Zanders, Dials, and Kinney, in charge of the precincts which house most of our evening classes (including USDA, FAA, NASA, HEW, GSA, the Library of Congress, and National Press Buildings) have agreed to notify their forces that large numbers of students are leaving these buildings each evening between 8 and 9. They advise that there has been little trouble in this area but suggest that people leaving class take normal precautions such as going with someone else, rather than alone, to bus stops and parking lots.

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SPRING ENROLLMENTS ARE EXCELLENT

The total course registration in the Evening Program is 7,022; and the number of active courses is 339, a 19.1 percent increase over the Spring of 1966.

The new Saturday morning classes in computer sciences have an enrollment of over 425. It is good to know that so many people are willing to continue their education through Saturday classes.

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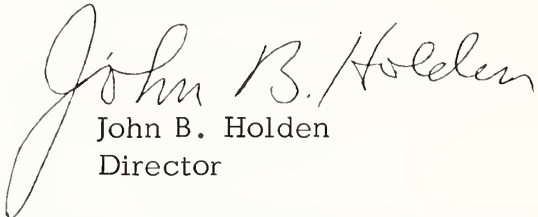
FACULTY NOTES

Walter W. Wilcox, long one of our valued instructors in agricultural economics, was recently named to be Director of Agricultural Economics for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, succeeding Nathan M. Koffsky, now with the Ford Foundation in India. Dr. Wilcox was senior specialist in agriculture for the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress for the past 16 years.

William Van Dersal, Deputy Administrator of the USDA Soil Conservation Service and another mainstay of our teaching staff, recently conducted a one-week Regional Seminar in Supervision in London for 23 Foreign Service employees from 10 European countries. He was named in a letter from President Johnson commending him, SCS administrator Don Williams, and all employees of that agency for "outstanding performance" in cost reduction.

John Sherrod, Division of Technical Information, U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, and a teacher of several Graduate School courses on documentation, spoke recently at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on "The Federal Viewpoint" in regard to the problem of disseminating technical information.

Sincerely yours,



John B. Holden
Director

P. S. We regret to report that our Registrar, Mrs. Constance Coblenz, slipped on an icy sidewalk resulting in a double fracture of her right leg. She is hospitalized at Washington Hospital Center.